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## MISCELLANY.

### My Cousins.

BY H. W.

I was at home at last, after ten years of wandering; at home, yet alone in the world. Though I had everything except friends, I would have given all for some thing to love, some one to love me. A stranger in my native place, and still an invader from the effect of a terrible fever which had lately prostrated me, I decended living in the old house, occupied only by servants.

I had an uncle in the West of England whom I had not seen since a child. He had married a widow with two little girls. I wondered if he had yet room in his heart to find a place for the nephew he used to love. I longed to be among friends, and thought I might find them in Uncle James and his family. I wrote to him, inviting myself to go down a short time, adding that I would start that very day. In truth I was afraid to wait for an answer, lest some troublesome circumstance should shut me up at home. But when fairly on my way, I troubled myself somewhat about my probable reception, and I devoutly hoped the two little girls would be no annoyance.

It was night when I arrived. Uncle James met me with a hearty greeting at the station, and, after a short drive, ushered me into the drawing-room, and introduced me to his wife and two daughters.

Mrs. Gray, Uncle James' wife, was a fair-looking woman, of soft and pleasant speech, and won my heart immediately by her gentle motherly ways. Bel, the eldest daughter, was a tall, graceful girl, with a fair complexion, clear, dark eyes, and beautiful hands that toyed gracefully with the knitting she seemed to be intent on. I could not help watching them. Indeed I was much taken up by thoughts of Bel, that I scarcely bestowed a second glance upon Ethel, the second daughter, who need not have been contrasted with Bel's beauty to be called plain. At supper, which was soon announced, I could not but notice the difference between the two. Ethel was not only plain, but exceedingly awkward, while Bel was the embodiment of grace. Uncle James and Aunt Mary talked to me about my travels, my lonely return, and other things; but I am sure I could not have repeated a word the next morning, so perfectly engrossed was I by the beautiful eldest daughter.

The heat of the summer was gone, and it was the pleasant time in the year for the long, delightful rambles we took over the field and hill. Ethel seemed ever accompanied us; but one day we had all been rambling in the wood that skirted Round Pond, a beautiful sheet of water that lay near my uncle's residence; and as we strolled homeward we stopped to look over the bank into its quiet depths.

"Oh!" said Bel, "do you see those beautiful flowers further down on the bank? How fresh and bright they look! Can you not get some?"

"Oh! Bel, it's dangerous," said Ethel. "The bank is steep, and he would be sure to fall."

Before Ethel had finished her remonstrance I was half way down, holding by the hanging branches, and grasping for the flowers. The bank was not only steep, but there was no firm foothold on it. I slipped and fell.

I awoke, and lay languidly on my pillow, without wish or power to raise my head. Suddenly voices in the next room met my ear, and I could but hear what they were saying.

"Oh! Bel, go in and stay with him while I help mother finish this," said Ethel; "for I'm afraid he may need something."

"Fool!" he would not know it if he does," replied Bel. "He is delicious. How can I read in there, and he all the time raving about somebody or other?"

"Oh! for shame Bel!" said Ethel. "You know he means you. When he is well, you were glad to lay by your book, interesting as it might be, for him."

"Of course," said Bel; "and shall he again, when he comes to his senses. He is rich, and worth putting up one's back for. But if you think I'm going in there to read now, you are mistaken; so go yourself, if you're afraid to leave him alone."

I heard a soft footfall in my room, then some one bent over me (I had shut my eyes as though sleeping), and close to my forehead was bent a soft cheek—moist too! It was only for a moment, but it thrilled me, knowing those tears had fallen for me.

As she turned to go noiselessly out, I opened my eyes. Yes, it was Ethel gliding softly away. I heard her say as she entered the other apartment, "Oh, Bel! he is sleeping sweetly. I am so thankful! Now I'll help mother finish her work and then I'll come and sit by him while he sleeps."

"No, you needn't," said Bel. "I'll go and change my dress and arrange my hair, and go myself. Perhaps he will know us when he wakes."

Then I slept, and when I opened my eyes again, I saw Aunt Mary and the girls sitting in the room at work.

Aunt Mary came to my bed and laid her hand on my forehead, saying tenderly, "You have been ill a long time, but you are better now, and must be very careful. Do not talk, but let every thing rest till you are a little stronger."

I was going to ask some question with regard to my illness, but shut my lips again and kept quiet; but my gaze wandered to Bel, who sat near me. She raised her beautiful eyes, full of tears, from her work, and smiled, then dropped

her long lashes again, and worked on quietly. I did not watch the soft white, flitting hands as it had once been my joy to do, but my glance wandered to the window where Ethel sat, and though she did not raise her eyes, I watched her as she worked. Her face, it seemed to me, was thinner and paler than I had ever seen it, but her light brown hair was brushed back in the same glossy waves from her forehead. I felt asleep watching her, and dreamed she was trying to pull me out of the water; but Bel held her back, and kept calling on me to get her some flowers which I could not reach.

Several weeks past, during which I gained strength rapidly, Bel was all attention, and was always alone with me in the forenoon. Once it would have filled me with joy to have her near me; now I cared no more for her than I should for a waxen doll, and I hated the afternoon with pleasure, for it always brought Aunt Mary and Ethel. One of the girls read aloud, and thus the hours passed very pleasantly.

At last I was able to go about again. The leaves had all fallen, and every thing looked blank and drear out of doors. I told them one morning, as we sat at breakfast, that I must soon go home.

Aunt Mary and Uncle James protested that I should stay with them all the winter. Bel also begged me to stay. Ethel said nothing, and I did not dare to look at her to read what I hoped her face expressed. I thanked them all, but did not say whether I would stay.

"If I return alone, Uncle James, it will be because Ethel wills it," said Ethel, "must I go back alone, or will you go with me?"

She raised her beautiful eyes, but they could not bear my look of admiration and love, and she bent her head over the table and sobbed and cried. In another moment we were alone, and I went and leaned over her and laid my hand upon her head.

"Ethel, Ethel, do not mind what I said. Forget it. Do not distress yourself, because you give me pain. If you do not love me I can go away, and you must forget all about it."

Up, like a flash, came the sunny brown head, and a broad, beautiful smile flashed over her face.

"But I do love you, Cousin Gerald. What then?"

I began to see how matters stood. I caught her in my arms, that I might look at her attentively. She bore the scrutiny, blushing and smiling through her tears.

I will not attempt to tell the many foolish things I said and did—for, what matters it? We were married, and went home before the snow fell; and I the dreary old house has a new aspect since the sunshine has been flitting through its large dark rooms. Love is a wonderful benefactor, they say; and Ethel, too, has grown pretty beneath its magic influence. Her hair lies in the same shining waves across her forehead, and her happy, cheerful face beams with unaltered beauty. Her smooth, white, shapely hands could bear comparison even with Bel's. But do I love my little darling better for that? No, indeed! I love her because she is a true, affectionate woman, my own "pearl of price." God bless my Ethel!

### The Horrors of the Nuremberg Castle.

Carlton writes to the Boston Journal from Nuremberg, Bavaria:

"Come with me to this old town, enter some of these edifices and look upon the administration of government as it was in the 16th and 17th centuries. We enter one of the towers of the castle, descend five steps and find ourselves in a museum, where are preserved the books of record giving us a history of the past; and not only books, but implements and instruments, which show more clearly than written words the administration of those days, with which the government of the United States is now compared. Here is a post four feet high in the center of the room, with two curious fixtures on the top, having some resemblance to gun locks.

What is this? The girl who acts as an usher raises the hammer which comes up with a click. She touches a spring and down they go, with a snap that startles you—fenced down by strong springs with a wheel that would have smashed your fingers to a jelly had you been under the hammer. This is a finger-crusher, a delicate little instrument used to extort confessions from reluctant witnesses or suspected criminals. Here are tracelets for the wrists, not of gold or silver, but of iron, and the parts which touch the wrists are studded with needles. Put them on your arm and turn a screw and they close upon the flesh, the needles piercing through curls, tendons, flesh and bones. It is one degree more excruciating than crushing the fingers.

Here is a head dress—a crown which has been worn by many men and women. It has sharp knives which cut through the scalp to the skull. Here are chains and weights to hold your feet to the floor and pulleys to draw your head at the same time to the ceiling. Here is a bench of solid oak, with a corrugated surface, upon which many men have been laid, held down by cords, to undergo the kneading process, and that rolling pin, knotty and knobby, also of oak, which lies upon the table, has been rolled backward and forward over the naked forms of men and women, kneading live flesh to bloody dough. Time and space would fail me were I to enumerate the instruments of torture here, or to set forth their uses. We can only look at the cradle—a huge trough of oak on rockers—the bottom and sides thickly set with pins, in which many victims have been rocked

to death. Think of lying on a bed of oaken pins, rolling to the right, to the left—always against pins—till the flesh becomes livid jelly. Here is a string of oaken beads, each bead sixteen-sided, about as large as hickory nuts. This was for sawing off arms and legs. Here is an instrument shaped like a pear. It is of iron, but to all appearance a harmless thing. But just take it for a gentle pull at the string attached to the stem of the pear, and it will be no longer a pear but a fall blown lily—an iron lily unfolding its leaves so suddenly and violently that your jaws are forced open till the joints crack in the sockets, while the delicate petals become piners, which grasp your tongue. No outcry now. No utterance of words. No screaming to raise the neighborhood. Moans and sighs only from the sufferer. One twitch of the string and the tongue is torn out by the roots.

We must leave this museum without mentioning the hundreds of canisters. We go into the court yard, stopping a moment to look at a tree from a lime tree which was in full vigor 700 years ago, and then we enter another door, descend a longer flight of stairs to dark, dismal dungeons, where no light ever falls except through narrow, iron grated windows. Here are ladders with windlasses and pulleys, on which victims were stretched till bones snapped, joint leaped from their sockets, and cords and tendons were torn asunder. Here are racks and wheels, pillories and stocks, whips and manacles. This was the place of torture. We leave these and creep through a narrow passage, through doorway after doorway, and reach at last, far under ground, far beneath all sight and sound of the other world a darker dungeon. This is the room of the Iron Maiden.

Here is a statue or image—a maiden with a head upon her head, an iron rifle around her neck, enveloped in an iron cloak. Suddenly the folds of the cloak are thrown open and by the dim light of the candle you see the lining of the garment is set with sharp spikes. Take one step forward and the folds envelope you, iron spikes pierce your body and into your eye-balls, clear through the vertebrae they penetrate. Not a quick embrace, but slowly you are enfolded, one turn of the screw, just enough to penetrate the flesh just enough to touch the apple of the quivering eye; then after an age of anguish, another turn and a hundred spikes reach a little nearer the nerves; and then as heat thirst and fever rack the body, another gentle turn and another age of torture; and then one more advance of the spikes towards the vitals till death comes, and the maiden, unfolding her arms, drops her victim through a trap door, down—down into unknown depths! We drop a pebble and hear the faint splash of waters far beneath.

Here is a skull. Anatomists say it is the skull of a female. You may put your fingers into the holes where the spikes which entered the eyes came through! No name on record. God only has the book of remembrance.

We think of this dungeon as connected with the barbarism of the middle ages; but we are not removed from those days of rigorous administration of law. Till Napoleon with his legions of France came across the Rhine, overthrowing all obstacles this iron maiden held out her arms to receive offenders against the law. On the approach of the French army in 1803, the Virgin, as it is called, with other of the instruments of torture, were thrown into a cart, and dispatched in haste out of the town, but fell into the hands of the victorious army. Not till then did the world know what sort of punishment were meted out to the offenders of the law.

We are to remember that Nuremberg was a free city. About thirty patrician families for a long time monopolized authority, and chose a council of state consisting of eight persons who formed the executives. This executive was an irresponsible body. The world knew nothing of their secret administration of affairs. Men disappeared, and no one knew what became of them.

An interesting relic of Arnold's march through Maine to Canada has just come to light in a piece of paper, with writing on it, as follows: "Dunkirk—with Arnold—1775." It was in a maple tree, which was probably cut in the town of Vassboro', and while being sawed at a mill here, a pine plug was cut into, which was covered with about nine inches of the tree, and on being removed a scrap of paper bearing the above in pencil was found. It is, without doubt, genuine, being on paper such as was manufactured in the last century, and the outside end of the plug was entirely grown over, being covered by about ninety rings of the wood that could be counted! This is now in the hands of Rev. Wm. A. Drew; but it is hoped that it will be placed in some public collection, this bit of paper being of much interest as bearing the name of Arnold written when at the zenith of honorable glory; and the tree which had it clapped in its heart is of interest as the last living thing that enshrined the name of Arnold as a true man.

Truth is the most powerful thing in the world, since fiction itself must be governed by it, and can only please by its resemblance.